



Forest Heights Police Department Policy and Procedures Manual

Subject:	Written Communications			
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Chapter: 1	Section: 5	Number of Pages:	4	Replaces: GO 2000-41, GO 2010-03
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A. Purpose

To establish policy and procedures associated with Forest Heights Police Department (FHPD) written communications.

B. Background

Several types of written directives may be used or issued by the FHPD. A written directive is any written document used to guide or affect the conduct or performance of FHPD employees. The term includes policies, procedures, rules, regulations, general orders, special orders, memoranda, and instructional materials. A written directive may be binding or informational. Binding documents convey a direct order or specific intent, and are designed to convey an edict to a subordinate by a higher authority.

C. General Orders (GO)

1. A GO is a binding document that relays a specific message from the highest levels within the chain of command.
2. General orders are subject to review and approval by the Mayor and Town Council pursuant to Section 23.1 of the Town Ordinance Code (Emergency Ordinance 03-10).
3. A temporary, interim or standing GO may be issued by authority of the Chief of Police and/or the Mayor, but are subject to eventual review and approval by the Town Council as long as any changes made by the Council comport with superior law.
4. General Orders are issued to:
 - a. promulgate policies and procedures relating to sworn officers and civilian of the FHPD.
 - b. announce adoption, revision, or canceling of a policy affecting the FHPD;
 - c. direct policy/procedures for the indefinite future;
 - d. disseminate information, instructions, or direct the action of personnel in specific situations or circumstances; and
 - e. adopt new or revise policy in the FHPD Manuals.
5. A GO supersedes all other orders in conflict therewith.
6. A GO may result in an addition or revision to the Manual.
7. All FHPD personnel will sign for a GO documenting it was received.
8. One copy of every GO will be filed in the Office of the Chief.

D. Special Orders (SO)

1. A SO is a binding document that is temporary and issued to outline instructions concerning particular situations.
2. A SO may be issued to announce a policy or procedure related to a specific circumstance, event, or policy/procedure that is of a temporary or self-canceling nature.
3. Examples of subject matter for a SO include the following:
 - a. Instructions to accomplish an objective;
 - b. Temporary procedures designed to cover an event of limited duration;
 - c. Directives to one or more employees, which do not influence the operation of others and for

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which no organizational change is necessary; and

d. Procedures to meet the requirements mandated by FHPD policy.

E. Validity and Longevity of Police Directives

1. Should the Mayor or Town Council fail to review, or otherwise choose not to approve, modify or deny a written directive issued by the Chief of Police, the written directive, if otherwise legally sufficient, shall remain in effect and shall be considered a standing and valid command by virtue of the express, implied and positional authority vested in the Mayor and the Chief of Police by the Town Charter, Section 23.1 of the Town Ordinance Code (Emergency Ordinance 03-10), and State law.
2. The Chief of Police and the Mayor shall both have a duty to formally submit any directive so issued governing the FHPD to the Town Council for its final review within 30 days of its initial issuance (i.e., effective date) by the Chief and/or the Mayor.
3. Unless otherwise limited, preempted or controlled by superseding law (i.e., state statute, ordinance, formal resolution or court order), the Mayor, as the Chief Executive Officer, may rescind, modify or countermand in writing any written directive issued by the Chief, subject to review by the Council.
4. The Mayor and any other civilian official of the Town must take care to ensure that any modification of a police directive, written order or policy does not interfere with or usurp a sworn officer's power and discretion to properly investigate individual crimes, cause an arrest in a specific case or otherwise use his full discretion to enforce the laws of the Town and this state regarding a specific case, entity or individuals.
5. Unless permitted by superior law, the Chief or the Mayor shall not promulgate or issue a written directive that conflicts with any ordinance, resolution, regulation or policy enacted or adopted by the Town Council.

F. Memorandum (Memo)

A memorandum is an informational written communication issued by a proper authority in order to issue information or instruction that does not warrant a formal order or binding written directive.

G. Personnel Order

A personnel order is a binding document that pertains to matters of assignment, change of duty assignment, and administrative matters relating to employment, and employee rights and benefits.

H. Review, Approval and Numbering of General Orders and Special Orders

1. Drafts of general orders and special orders will be submitted through channels, to the Office of the Chief.
2. The Office of the Chief will:
 - a. review drafts to insure continuity with existing policy or procedures and format;
 - b. distribute drafts, as deemed necessary, to FHPD personnel for comments and recommendations;
 - c. initiate the preparation of orders, consistent with the staff responses, for the Chief's and Mayors approval and signature;
 - d. assign the order numbers; and
 - e. maintain a log for general orders and special orders issued.
3. Suggested or required revisions to the manual may be forwarded through channels, to the Office of the Chief.

I. Distribution of Written Orders and Communications

1. FHPD personnel will sign form FHPD 1, Receipt or Appraisal of Orders, Memoranda and Manual

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Revisions thus documenting they understand they are responsible for having full knowledge of the contents of the document.

2. The form FHPD 1 will be filed in the Office of the Chief.

J. Detailed Report

1. Detailed Reports will be used to transmit information within the FHPD.
2. Detailed Reports will be used to:
 - a. document an incident;
 - b. describe an incident;
 - c. report an incident; and
 - d. convey FHPD business.
3. Detailed Reports will be type written on FHPD letterhead stationary and signed in ink by the originator. FHPD letterhead will be used should the need arise for such a report to be presented in court.

K. Reports Associated with a Tour of Duty

1. Reports associated with an incident occurring on an officer's shift will be completed prior to an officer's end of shift.
2. Requests for an extension on completing such reports will be submitted to the Chief.
3. The type of incident will determine the report form to be used.
4. Reports returned to an officer to be re-written will be completed and resubmitted within 24 hours of an officer being notified a re-write of a report is required.

L. Form FHPD 2 – Written Interdepartmental Communications

1. A Form 2 will be used to convey information within the FHPD;
2. A Form 2 may be used to document a verbal order given to a subordinate;
3. A Form 2 will be used to announce training schedules;
4. A Form 2 will be used to submit a request;
5. A Form 2 will be used to submit a suggestion; and
4. A Form 2 **will not** be used to establish policy.

M. Routing Slip - Form FHPD 3

1. May be used to track and document official reports through the chain of command.
2. The subject matter of a report will be typed or handwritten across the top of the routing slip E-mail.
3. Where typed endorsements are needed to comment on, or, add to the original report, the routing slip will indicate "See Endorsement" in the appropriate space provided.
4. If no typed endorsement is needed, the routing slip will be completed and the report will be forwarded.

N. Training Publications

Communications associated with training are intended to be informative in nature and their issuance does not constitute an authority for compliance.

O. Command/Staff Meetings

1. Policies and/or procedures formulated as a result of command meetings will not be disseminated verbally for compliance unless the matter is of such urgency that this course of action is necessary.
2. In such instances, an appropriate written order will be prepared and distributed as soon as possible

following the issuance of such a verbal order.

P. Cancellation and Amendment of Orders

1. All orders will remain in effect until:
 - a. a termination date specified in the directive has passed; or
 - b. the directive is amended, superseded or canceled.
2. Orders will be amended by the issuance of an appropriate order under a new number containing only the language addressing the specific change, or will be rewritten as a new order rescinding the original.
3. An order that amends, rescinds, supersedes or refers to previous orders, rules, etc. will include the appropriate notation (order number, etc.) necessary to locate the material to be corrected or canceled.
4. The Office of the Chief will maintain:
 - a. a system for updating and purging all general orders and special orders; and
 - b. a log of active orders issued by the Chief to facilitate appropriate updating of filing and retention of same.

Q. Standardized Collation of Reports

1. Reports forwarded through channels will be collated with all original pages of the report stapled together as a set, with the first page on top and succeeding pages beneath in chronological order.
2. Copies of reports will be stapled together in the same manner as the original.
3. If a report is in response to a complaint:
 - a. staple the complaint on top of the first page of the original report; and
 - b. attach copies on top of all other set copies.
4. Collate endorsements into each set chronologically with the last endorsement at the end of each report.
5. Insert appendices into a report where appropriate.